

FLIGHT JACKET

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Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

August 13, 2004

'Greyhawks' claim top squadron accolades

Story by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

MAG-16 Combat Correspondent

AL TAQADDUM, Iraq - The Marine Corps Aviation Association recently named the "Greyhawks" of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, as the Edward C. Dyer Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron of the Year.

The award was established in memory of Brig. Gen. Dyer, who was a pioneer helicopter pilot.

The "Greyhawks" are no strangers to awards. In 2001, HMM-161 also earned the Marine Corps' top spot as a CH-46E Sea Knight squadron in the annual aviation association awards.

Receiving the award has been a huge morale boost, according to Maj. James R. Kennedy, executive officer, HMM-161.

"Winning the award is a source of great pride in the squadron," Kennedy said. "It makes it gratifying to get this award while still in combat."

This fact may have been a contributing factor to the squadron's success this year, the 38-year-old claimed.

"The thing that made us stand out is we began the period during (Operation Iraqi Freedom) and made a short turnaround, then ended it again in combat," the Glendale, Ariz., native explained. "We were the only squadron to do that."



Two CH-46E Sea Knights fly over Al Taqaddum, Iraq, on a test flight during the early evening hours of April 8.
Photo by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

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'Bats' take flight in war on terror

Story by Sgt. Kristen L. Tull

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Those on Iraqi soil may now be seeing two black wings flying near the speed of sound, followed by 11 other F/A-18D Hornets.

Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 sent their Marines to replace Marine Attack Squadron 214 as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

"It's going to take a while to get there; we're doing it in several legs," said Capt. Michael Bridges, Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization officer and weapons systems officer, VMFA(AW)-242. "We've been waiting for this for a while now, and we finally got the go ahead to take part."

The pilots as well as their crew have spent numerous hours preparing for this real-world mission.

"The jets are definitely ready," said Pfc. Nathaniel Fry, F/A-18D mechanic, VMFA(AW)-242. "Last night we threw a "panel party", where

the whole squadron came out here, and we spent hours checking every screw on every panel to make sure it was secure."

Most of the mechanics departed on an Air Force C-17, a few days after the planes. Their first stop is Italy.

"I've never left the country before. California is the furthest I've been from South Carolina, so, I'm a little nervous," said Fry.

Fry says it's a long flight, and his biggest worry is the planes not making it over there.

"My brain has been set on one thing, not messing up, they depend on us to do that," stated Fry. "I'm nervous about what could happen, what can happen. It will feel good when they actually get over there knowing I was part of that."

Everyone works together, sometimes that extra "push" is the fear of failing.

"I just don't want to fail the Marines on the ground. Our (the pilots') job is relatively safe compared to theirs," said Bridges.

With family and friends waving goodbye, their skipper, Lt. Col Kevin Iiams led the 'Bats' down the runway to do what they've prepared to do for months.



Marines with Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 show their support as one of the first F/A-18Ds of their squadron taxis to the runway. The 'Bats' deployed to support Operation Iraqi Freedom Aug. 4. Photo by Staff Sgt. Chad McMeen

"There's no doubt in my mind we are ready to accomplish this mission and return safe and sound," said Capt. Greg McGuire, powerline officer-in-charge and F/A-18D pilot.

Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



78°/64°
Today



80°/63°
Saturday



81°/64°
Sunday

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Navy posts diversity directorate

Story by Chief of Naval Personnel Office

Department of the Navy

WASHINGTON — With a clear strategic vision of incorporating diversity into the very fabric of the Navy organization, the Diversity Directorate was established Aug. 2 in a ceremony held outside the Directorate spaces at the Navy Annex.

The new directorate will bolster the Chief of Naval Operations' vision to create a sense for everyone that the Navy is committed to their personal growth and development from the moment they begin Naval service.

"Leveraging the diversity of all our people makes us more operationally capable by cultivating all our differences ... to help us make better decisions ... decisions that, in turn, make us more agile, more flexible and more effective," said Vice Adm. Gerry Hoewing, chief of naval personnel. "I am proud of our commitment to diversity and feel strongly that our superb readiness today is the direct result of the time and attention we have devoted to improving it."

With this step, the Navy signals to Sailors and civilians that their diversity is valued for the innovative ideas and unique experiences they bring to the fleet.

"The Diversity Directorate's mission is to assist Navy leaders in creating an environment that encourages and enables our creative and innovative Sailors and civilians to reach their personal and professional potential," said Capt. Syd Abernethy, the new head of the Navy Diversity Directorate in Washington.

Seeing a direct relationship between diversity and mission readiness, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark added new focus on diversity in his Guidance for 2004. Clark expanded the traditional focus of diversity beyond race and gender, and folded in a Sailor's creativity, culture, ethnicity, religion, skills and talents.

"The advent of new technology and the resultant speed at which lethal decisions are made require more creative and innovative Sailors," Abernathy said.

With retention and recruitment at the highest levels in recent history, the Navy can now afford to focus on shaping the force, ensuring the best-qualified, most diverse candidates are challenged to seek leadership roles in the senior enlisted and officer ranks of the future. To focus on the strategic diversity mission, the Directorate is divided into four working groups: Accessions, Training and

Development, Organizational Alignment and Communications.

The Accessions group is determined to ensure that the Navy is presented to the best and brightest potential enlisted and officer candidates available across the entire spectrum of American society. They will seek out highly qualified and skilled candidates, ensuring the Navy is presented to a diverse audience at all academic levels.

The Training and Development group strives to embed the Navy's diversity vision into all Sailor and civilian leadership training and management tools. It seeks to create a culture that values diversity through continuous education and training of Sailors and civilians, promoting individual success through opportunities and access to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities to their fullest potential. The group will track, monitor and assess promotion, advancement, program selections, and retention rates of all Sailors and civilians, and use results as trend indicators and guides for success.

The Organizational Alignment group will develop and maintain an organizational structure that ensures diversity initiatives and programs are integrated and aligned within the Navy. Two examples are the Diversity Senior Advisory Group chaired by the Vice CNO with members from the Navy, industry, academia, and retirees that will act as a standing body of influence to advise our most senior leaders on trends and diversity best practices. The second is the Diversity Fleet Council, with members from across the Navy, who will provide unfiltered feedback on diversity issues and will assist in execution of the Navy's diversity initiatives.

Finally, the Communications Group will inform and educate all Sailors, active and reserve, their families, retirees and Department of the Navy civilians about the current diversity initiatives, programs and opportunities. They will also work to keep the general public, potential recruits, media, and legislative and affiliated groups informed about the Navy diversity programs.

The ceremony marked the beginning of a new strategic focus not the end of a program development. "This is not the end – we can always do better – especially when it comes to sewing diversity into the fabric of our culture, and that's what we are trying to achieve here today," said Hoewing. "This new directorate will bring a new level of awareness to the fleet."

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MIRAMARKS

"How has diversity impacted the military?"



PFC. JERMELL CHAVIS

Maintenance Administration
HMH-361

"Diverse views bring a better understanding of others and helps you relate to other people."

PFC. EDWARD GRANT

Motor Transport Operations
MWSS-373

"New outlooks and opinions help to think of new and better ways of getting things done."




CPL. BILHAN SAAVEDRA

Quality Assurance
HMH-361

"It brings different views and ways of doing things so people can learn more from each other."



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Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

Marines remove piece of past, build brighter future

Story by Staff Sgt. Demetrio J. Espinosa

24th MEU Combat Correspondent

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq — For the past 15 months, a local family has had to live with the constant reminder of the former Iraqi Army that used their land to fight coalition forces. Since Iraqi soldiers abandoned their post, children have been playing near the howitzer left behind.

Marines and Sailors from Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group 24, 24th MEU, returned to the site where, just a couple of weeks before, they promised to remove the piece of artillery.

The howitzer was discovered during a humanitarian assistance mission to deliver potable water to residents in the area. One of the residents took the water, and when asked if he needed anything else, he asked to have the howitzer removed. According to the resident, he was afraid for his children's safety because they often played on it.

"For this mission the MSSG had to call on several of its detachments, its Maintenance Detachment, Explosives Ordnance Disposal, transportation support and some staff mem-

bers," said Capt. Thomas H. Gilley, operations officer, MSSG-24, and Glen Burnie, Md., native. "The Maintenance Detachment is the main effort; everybody else is out here in support of this mission."

The Maintenance Detachment's first task was to see if the howitzer was moveable. Once that was accomplished, they went to work loading the large artillery piece.

"We came out, brought the wrecker out, and our job was to winch it in, and set it up so we could put it on the flat bed and take it," said Cpl. David G. Lopez, a vehicle recovery specialist with the Maintenance Detachment, MSSG-24.

"It wasn't too tough," the Lamont Calif., native explained. "But cranking on that wheel was pretty tough."

Preparing the howitzer to be loaded was the easiest part of the process. The hardest part, since the howitzer was missing one of its four tires, was loading it onto a flatbed trailer. The Marines first hooked it up to their 7-ton tow truck. Then the artillery piece had to be driven onto the disconnected and lowered flat bed trailer from the back end. Once that was carefully done and it was safely on the trailer, it was disconnected from the

tow truck and secured to the trailer.

The leathernecks came up with this solution after a few failed attempts to load the howitzer. In the end, success came through perseverance for the section that never quits.

"There isn't a task (MSSG-24 Marines) think they can't accomplish," said Gilley. "Our motto is if we can't find a way, we make a way."

With that mission accomplished, the Marines also made great strides in the MEU's larger goal of being a good neighbor to the Iraqi people.

"Their workload never stops and they never stop producing results," said Gilley of the Maintenance Detachment. "Not only are they working to help the MEU, they are working to help the local populace and to make a good impression of why we are here."

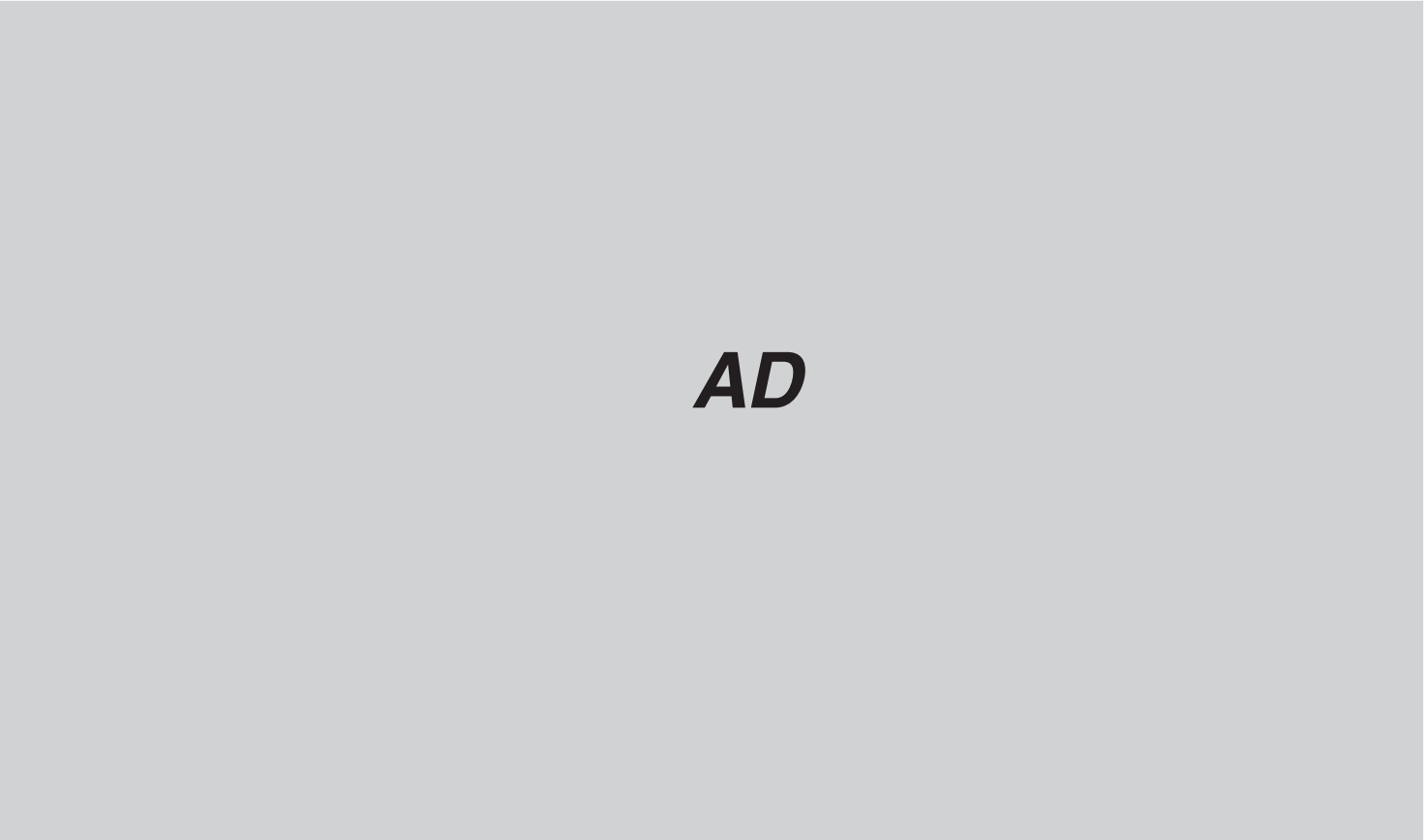
The Iraqi spirits weren't the only ones boosted.

"It makes me feel pretty good helping out people," said Cpl. Ron A. Underwood, a Logistical Vehicle System operator with the Transportation Support Detachment, MSSG-24.

"You drive down the road and see all the kids waving at you, it kind of makes you feel good," added the Chesterfield, Mo., native.



ABOVE: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Christopher W. Hedgorth and Cpl. David G. Lopez of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit look at a GHN 45 155mm howitzer to find the best way to load it on a Logistical Vehicle System. BELOW: An Iraqi GHN 45 155mm howitzer is pulled onto a Logistic Vehicle System trailer by a 7-ton truck. The howitzer, left by the Iraqi Army last year following the war with coalition forces, has been a safety hazard in an Iraqi citizen's yard. Photos by Staff Sgt. Demetrio J. Espinosa



‘Generation Kill’ *New book describes war in Iraq from ‘grunt’ perspective*

Review by Cpl. Paul Leicht

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

‘Generation Kill: Devil Dogs, Iceman, Captain America and the New Face of American War’ is an extraordinary book with an unusual title that may turn some heads (or turn some people off), but should not stop every voting American from picking up this “must read” book by Evan Wright.

Saving the reader from political spins, the book is an expansion of a

series of articles written by Wright for *Rolling Stone* during the summer of 2003.

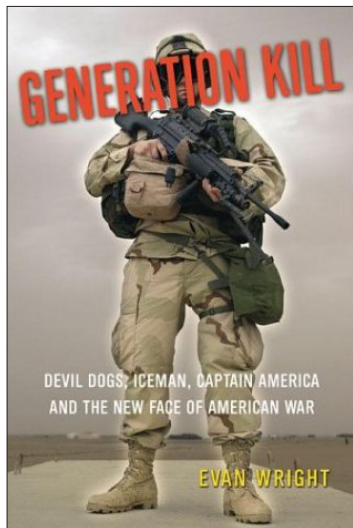
Embedded with the Marines of First Reconnaissance Battalion who welcomed him with open arms, Wright lived on the front lines with a platoon from the beginning of combat operations.

His birds-eye perspective tells an intimately harrowing and emotional story of well-trained young men in the business of defending their country—even if it means taking the lives of enemy combatants with deadly efficiency. Wright’s vivid story is a chronicle of triumphs and horrors of physical, moral and emotional challenges that the Marines endured while helping secure a victory in a war that in many ways still roars on to this day.

‘Generation Kill’ is a timely account of modern American war. But more importantly, it is a timeless description of the human drama unfolding in the Middle East.

Brutally honest, intense, raw and funny, Wright’s story will undoubtedly become a well-deserved addition to the literature of American wartime experience.

‘Generation Kill’ is published by Putnam Publishing Group and is available at retail bookstores, including the Miramar Marine Corps Exchange bookstore.



Deploying Marines prepare to vote with absentee ballot

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

One vote elected Adolph Hitler to the head of the Nazi party in 1923. One vote decided that English would be the American language in 1776 and one vote made Texas part of the United States in 1845.

The upcoming presidential election can be determined by one vote and servicemembers can cast their ballots by mail before Sept. 15.

“The main problem I was having with voting was not knowing where to go or who to talk to in order to cast my ballot,” said Lance Cpl. Curtis L. Greene, avionics technician, Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101.

Being overseas or even in another state can make the voting process more confusing than it has to be. However, casting a vote can be as simple as filing out a form, dropping it off in a mailbox and waiting for a ballot.

“I haven’t gotten around to requesting an absentee ballot, and I keep putting it off each day,” mentioned Lance Cpl. Chris P. McComsey, postal clerk, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron. “I would like to vote if I had the time.”

Time and not knowing how to vote are two of the biggest reasons many people do not fill out a ballot. However, each unit has a voting assistance officer readily available to help Marines, Sailors and family members with the voting process.

“A lot of people don’t know that they can submit an absentee ballot, which is a simple process,” said Natasha Robinson,



A Marine mails his absentee ballot for the 2004 presidential election. Servicemembers can request an absentee ballot from a voting assistance officer to register and vote. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

adjutant and voting assistance officer, H&HS.

A servicemember can apply for an absentee ballot and register to vote simultaneously by going to their voting assistance officer or by filling out a federal post card application. A voting assistance officer can help servicemembers find the mailing address from their state and help with any questions on completing the form.

The postage-paid form should be mailed before Sept. 15 to ensure ample time to vote in the presidential election. An unregistered citizen’s federal post card application must be re-

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CMC visits Miramar, addresses troops

Story by Cpl. T.D. Smith

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent



“Marines have been performing magnificently in, probably, one of the most dangerous areas in Iraq, the Al Anbar province,” said Gen. Michael W. Hagee.

In additional approval, the general also pointed out the

Marine Corps actions in Haiti.

“We have a battalion of Marines down in Haiti, because no one else could respond to those particular contingencies in the time that was required,” said Hagee.

While the commandant had praise for the Corps’ efforts in Iraq and Haiti, he also had advice on improvements the Marines needed to make.

“We are about being a professional force that is always ready. Now, we have done a pretty darn good job (keeping Marines safe) in Iraq and in Afghanistan, and in Djibouti, probably the three most dangerous places in the world right now,” said Hagee. “I’ll tell you where we have not been doing a good job (at safety) is right here in the continental U.S.,” the general continued.

Pfc. Filip Pineda, new join clerk, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, said this comment was particularly impor-

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AD

MAG-16, 1st Recon unite for historic combat jump

Story by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

MAG-16 Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD, Iraq - Six recon pathfinders from 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, recently jumped into the Iraqi night sky and into history from a Marine KC-130 Hercules cargo plane belonging to the joint Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadrons 234 and 352, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

The high altitude high opening jump took place in western Iraq, July 23.

Although reconnaissance Marines have religiously practiced air insertions time and time again, they have been virtually nonexistent in combat. According to Headquarters Marine Corps historical reports, the last combat airdrop a Marine Corps unit successfully performed was nearly 35 years ago.

The first was on June 14, 1966 during the Vietnam War. A small team of recon Marines made the low altitude night jump determined to quietly insert and set up an observation point within enemy territory. The team made it to the ground with only one small injury and was later extracted.

The jump was hailed as a success by most involved and the combat jump was accepted as a viable means of placing Marines in hostile areas.

The second, on Sept. 5, 1967, almost killed the combat airdrop idea for the Marine Corps. A group of nine Marines jumped into the night sky for a supposed 700-foot elevation drop. Because of mechanical malfunctions with the plane, the Marines unknowingly jumped from around 1500 to 2000 feet.

The team was blown off course by unexpected winds and landed separately in dense jungles far from their intended target. They suffered numerous wounded, three of which had to be medically evacuated, and some of the team barely escaped capture by the enemy.

The failure of this mission halted the process for two years until Nov. 17, 1969, when the last jump occurred and the three Vietnam jumps marked the end of the Marine Corps combat jump history - until now.

Theoretically, the jump was nothing different from the numerous training jumps the seasoned veterans have completed in their careers. What made this particular jump so special was

the location and circumstances, claimed Master Sgt. Todd Smalenberg, primary jumpmaster, 1st Recon Bn.

“This is the first combat (high altitude high opening parachute drop) in the history of the Marine Corps,” said Smalenberg.

When the Marine Corps first implemented the parachute insertion program, the purpose was the clandestine insertion of troops to prevent enemy counter movement.

The reasoning behind the July 23 mission was along similar lines, according to Maj. Douglas B. Davis, Hercules aircraft commander, Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 234, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. Davis was in charge of the Hercules aircraft that delivered the group of six pathfinders to their destination.

“We were called in for this mission because the ground inserts were attracting a lot of at-

tention and taking a lot of fire,” the 36-year-old, McAllen, Texas native said. “They wanted to go in by parachute in order to avoid detection.”

Although the historical implications of the drop were important, the Marines had an important mission to complete, said Smalenberg.

“We did an infiltration into an objective area to conduct an initial internal guidance of two CH-46E (Sea Knights),” the 39-year-old Oscoda, Mich., native explained of his team’s mission. “We were to all insert clandestinely to the area to conduct counter (improvised explosive devices) ambushes.”

IED attacks on convoys and ground patrols are one of the problems coalition forces are facing in the ongoing struggle to secure and stabilize Iraq. This mission is one of many that are being used to counter this threat, Smalenberg mentioned.

Overall, the mission was considered a success by those involved, claimed 1st Lt. Ken M. Karcher, airborne direct air support center, Marine Air Support Squadron 1, 3rd MAW, who relayed information for the recon teams once they hit the ground.

“It was a pretty simple mission and it went over pretty well,” the 26-year-old Raleigh, N.C., native said. “It was very well coordinated by the ground unit.”

“They went in, they were blacked out and we left,” he added. “They didn’t have enemy contact when they hit the ground. To me, that’s success.”

The jump was something the enemy might not have expected, claimed Smalenberg, but the group took extra precautions in the choice of their jump by opting for the high opening.

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AD



1st Sgt. John K. Bell, Alpha Company 1st Sgt., 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force, adjusts a parachute for Gunnery Sgt. Brandon L. Desilet, assistant radio operator, 1st Recon Bn. at Al Taqaddum, Iraq, July 23. Photo by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

GREYHAWKS
continued from page 1

The “Greyhawks” have been in Iraq since February providing casualty evacuation support to I Marine Expeditionary Force units in and around the area of Iraq known as the Sunni Triangle.

Although Lt. Col. David W. Coffman, commanding officer, HMM-161, will not accept the award formally until the awards banquet in September, the squadron’s Marines and Sailors have already been notified that they have earned the recognition. They were also notified that they did indeed help to earn the award, Kennedy assured.

Many facets of squadron operations are taken into consideration for the award, such as flight exposure and operational achievements, Kennedy remarked.

“We submit a data sheet in all areas of the squadron that paints a picture of the overall squadron,” he said. “The board picks who they think excelled the most.”

There is a long list of people to thank, Kennedy claimed.

“This is all because of the guys in the ‘S’ shops in supporting roles and the guys turning wrenches. It was, no kidding, a total squadron effort,” he said. “Also, the (staff noncommissioned officers) make everything happen. Without their leadership, we couldn’t get these helicopters in the air.”

It is this leadership that the “Greyhawks” have built and filtered down

to all their Marines, which has enabled them to excel, the major noted.

“From the commanding officer on down, we’ve fostered a command climate that focuses on the mission of firing and flying,” he said. “We focus on the Marines first, which has provided such a dynamic leadership and inspiration to the squadron.”

This has allowed the Marines to focus on the tasks at hand instead of non-mis-

sion related things, Kennedy revealed.

“The mission we have is an extremely important mission,” he explained. “It is one we’ve lived and breathed out here without a break. The Marines understand how important our casualty evacuation mission is and have responded magnificently.”

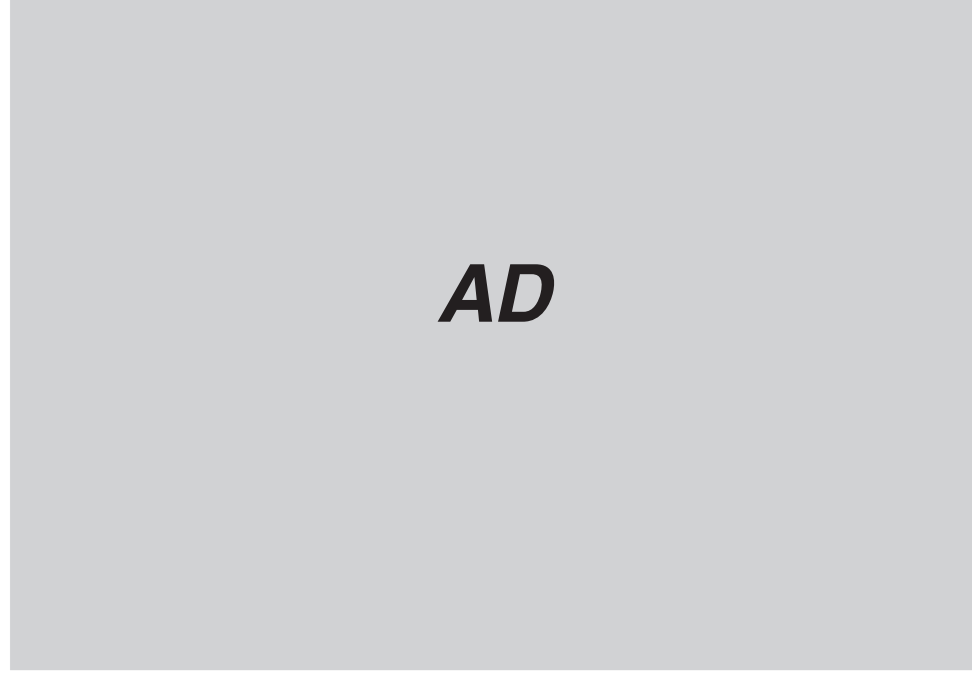
Although the squadron is thrilled about the award and fully plans to take advantage of the “bragging rights”

they’ve earned through the award, there is only one thing that could overshadow this achievement, Kennedy explained.

“We’ve not dropped on mission since the very first day we took it,” he said. “The success of the (casualty evacuation) mission means there are Marines walking around who wouldn’t be. It’s nice to be recognized, but pulling injured Marines out of a firefight is the ultimate recognition. Nothing is better than that.”



ABOVE: Petty Officer 3rd Class Luis Fonseca, casualty evacuation corpsman with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, leads a group of Army soldiers carrying their wounded comrades to the waiting CH-46E Sea Knights that will take them to safety. **BELOW:** A CH-46E Sea Knight from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, flies over a group of buildings near Fallujah, Iraq, July 17. *Photos by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte*



First female in field gets promoted to master guns

86 years after the first female Marine enlisted, Abigail D. Olmos becomes first female support equipment master gunnery sergeant

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Opha Mae Johnson made history when she became the first woman to enlist in the Marines in 1918. Master Gunnery Sgt. Abigail D. Olmos also made Marine Corps history when she became the first female to get promoted to master gunnery sergeant in her field as a support equipment asset manager.

Olmos' chevrons were pinned on July 16 after she devotedly served in the Corps for 21 years.

"Getting promoted to master gunnery sergeant has been the greatest honor in my Marine Corps career," said Olmos. "I will live up to and uphold all the responsibilities of this rank and set the example for other Marines to follow."

The St. Louis, Mo., native ensured she stayed on top of her military occupational specialty by becoming familiar with the promotion manual, seeking additional knowledge in her field, doing her professional military education classes, attending college courses, being physically fit, keeping a high personal appearance, and lastly, leading by example.

"She is a great Marine to emulate and follow the footsteps of," said Sgt. Charles Ramirez, support equipment manager, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. "She always makes sure she gets everything done that is required of her and more. She also ensures that we get all of our requirements for promotion done."

Surprisingly, Olmos joined the armed services for college money and almost joined the Air Force, but opted



Master Gunnery Sgt. Abigail D. Olmos, support equipment asset manager and the first female to get promoted to master gunnery sergeant in her field, helps Lance Cpl. Lesa Powers, Individual Maintenance Readiness List asset manager, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16 with a Computer Self Evaluation Checklist for an equipment inventory. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

for the Marine Corps when she was guaranteed a technical specialty.

However, once she made it past the yellow footprints, Olmos discovered that the Marine Corps was her calling and has received four Navy Commendation medals, one Navy Achievement Medal and seven good conducts.

She first served in the 6500 occupational field, aviation ordnance technician. Olmos then made a lateral move in 1995 to become a support equipment asset manager in a brand new MOS. Since the move, Olmos has become one

of the most senior Marines in the field.

"I really like my job, it can be demanding at times, but it is worth it because we ensure that all the Marine Corps aircraft squadrons in the 3rd Marine Aviation Wing can meet their mission by providing the necessary amount of aircraft support equipment to them," said Olmos.

She does her job and makes sure that the Marines around her do their jobs by helping them gain knowledge and understanding in the field.

"She knows everything," said Ramirez, a San Antonio, native. "When I first got here, she would make me look up all of the answers to my questions instead of giving me the answers. I would have to come back to her when I found out the solution."

Ramirez emulated Olmos' techniques to benefit the Marines around him.

"I picked up on a lot of those leadership traits," Ramirez added. "Now when a junior Marine asks me a question, I won't tell him the answer, but instead help him come up with the solution on his own,"

Olmos will continue to help countless Marines in the future. She has no plans of leaving the Marine Corps anytime soon.

"The Marine Corps has evolved in equal opportunities for women since I joined. Before, senior Marines didn't feel females should do the same things as men. But now, more female Marines are enlisting and the gender phobias have disappeared," explained Olmos.

"It has been a great privilege to stay in the Marine Corps and become a master gunnery sergeant. It has been a great journey and I would do it again," she exclaimed.

AD

Son pins new CWO4 rank on father in Iraq

Story by Staff Sgt. Houston F. White Jr.

MWHS-3 Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD, Iraq — Freshly promoted Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael R. King, assistant wing embark officer, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, never had an inkling when he became a parent nearly two decades ago that his first-born son was destined to serve with him in a combat zone, much less help pin on his new rank.

What the father of Lance Cpl. Jonathan R. King, tactical network administrator, Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd MAW, did know however, was that his influence would guide his son into the military, as well as help him deal with the trials of adulthood.

“I think every young man should serve his country in some form or capacity,” said the 42-year-old native of Rockledge, Fla. “I didn’t shove Jonathan (into joining a particular branch of service), but I did lean him toward the Marine Corps.

“I prepared him for facing life by simply acting like any father would, not just a Marine dad,” King added. “I always taught him that if you’re going to do something, do it right the first time and my kids have all memorized that saying,” said the father of four.

Although Jonathan’s Marine Corps upbringing made his decision to follow his father’s career example a foregone conclusion, the 19-year-old native of Wildomar, Calif., still never anticipated working so close to the leatherneck he idolized growing up.

“My dad was my role model my entire childhood until I turned 18 and went to boot camp,” Jonathan explained. “As a kid, I was in awe of Marines because I got to see a lot of their training, (equipment and facilities).”

“I knew that I was going to be a Marine ever since I was small, but I never imagined working in the same command as my dad,” he professed.

Both father and son look at the rare opportunity of serving together while deployed

far from home as a positive situation.

“I think one good thing about being (in Iraq) is being able to keep my eye on my son and making sure he’s safe and doing his job properly,” remarked the chief warrant officer. “I’m not too worried about my son’s safety while he’s here though because we’re located in a very secure place, in my opinion.

“I’m happy Jonathan’s over here getting good Marine Corps training and serving his country the way I wanted him to do,” added the clearly pleased father.

“It’s really reassuring and nice to be able to go and talk to my dad every once in awhile, or just say ‘hi’. Otherwise, it’s business as usual, and things are no different here between us than they are at (Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, Calif.),” stated Jonathan.

“While I was stationed at (MCAS) Miramar, I used to go home every weekend just because I had the chance, so the only difference here is I get to see my dad every day instead of every weekend,” he explained.

According to Col. Don W. Zautcke, wing logistics officer, MWHS-3, the King duo does an exceptional job of managing the professional and personal sides of their unique relationship.

“They interact on both an officer-enlisted level and a father-son level, and they do a great job of balancing those relationships,” said the 45-year-old from Milwaukee. “It’s good because you can see a lot of Chief Warrant Officer King’s qualities in (Lance Corporal King).”

The colonel was able to get a closer look at the bond between the father and son team when he presided over the elder King’s promotion here Aug. 1.

“In my entire time in the Marine Corps, during war or peace, I have never seen anything like the promotion that just happened,” admitted Zautcke. “I believe that this experience was a unique one for both Chief Warrant Officer and Lance Corporal King.”

For father and son, the promotion ceremony was more than unique; it was some-

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Lance Cpl. Jonathan R. King (left), tactical network administrator, Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, carefully pins new rank insignia onto the collar of his father, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael R. King, assistant wing embark officer, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, alongside 45-year-old Milwaukee native Col. Don W. Zautcke (center), wing logistics officer, MWHS-3, in Al Asad, Iraq, Aug 1. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Houston F. White Jr.*



‘Spyder’ speaks to MCAA

Gen. William “Spyder” Nyland, assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, addresses members of the Marine Corps Aviation Association and their guests during the first MCAA Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum Fundraiser Aug. 8. The MCAA has pledged to donate \$25,000 to help build the a new Marine Corps aviation mesuem at Miramar. *Photo by Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III*

AD

Station makes 7-digit switch

Story by Cpl. T.D. Smith

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Tomorrow at 4:59 a.m., an upgrade in the station’s communications software will change the way everyone on station dials on administrative lines. Anyone wanting to make an on base call will have to use all seven digits instead of just the seven button and then the last four digits of the number.

Headquarters Marine Corps sent out a message in July of 2000 to standardize seven-digit dialing in all administrative telephone systems on all bases, posts and stations. Due to technical limitations, the telephone switchboard on Miramar was unable to comply with the seven-digit standard. With the new software in place, the station will now follow through with the directive of Headquarters Marine Corps.

“We (Miramar) are the only ones not yet dialing seven digits,” said Bob Tocki, telecommunications manager. “The new upgrade improved the system, nothing that is user apparent, but it did increase capabilities to allow seven-digit dialing.”

The process will take the switcher system off-line for at least 10 minutes, but should not exceed 15. This allows the switcher to upload the new operating system, enabling the seven-digit base.

The upgrade will not effect dialing “9-9” to make off base calls, nor will it change dialing “9-4” to make Defense Switch Network calls.

A civilian company remotely monitors the system to ensure it is working properly.

“It (the computers that run the switcher

system) is totally watched 24–7. If something is wrong, some of the problems can be handled from the remote site. If not, they (the contracted company) dispatch someone to physically come out and fix the problem,” said Tocki.

Individual telephones with automatic dialing or stored personal telephone directories will have to be reprogrammed if they contain on base numbers. The on base numbers will need to be changed to include all seven numbers. Stored off base numbers will still work if the phone was programmed with the “9-9” prefix and the full number. Programmed DSN numbers will also function properly.

Off base numbers are not free of cost to the base and should be used in the scope of mission accomplishment.

“Someone in supply calling an off base contractor to order a part for an airplane engine is fine,” said Lt. Col. Cindy Rosen, communications officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron. “Calling mom (off base) to see how the dog is doing is not acceptable.”

Using the administrative telephone system to log onto the Internet is also misuse.

Dialing-up through the off base number is still charged to the government bill. Even if a personal Internet service provider is used, the switcher sends out the dial up as an off base call. Marines caught using the system for this purpose can be charged for the offense.

For further information or questions call the G-6 help desk. After 5 a.m. tomorrow, call 577-6622 using the new seven-digit system.

BALLOTS

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ceived 15 days prior to the election. A registered voter’s federal post card application or ballot request letter, needs to be in the hands of the county election official seven days before voting day.

“It is really important to get your votes in early, if it gets to the officials too late, you will not be able to cast a vote,” explained Robinson, a Bremerton, Wash., native. “That is one of the most common mistakes made by voters.”

Once the local election officials send back the ballot (about 30-45 days before election day), it must be completed and returned by 8 p.m. on voting day.

Servicemembers deployed overseas should apply for an absentee ballot before Sunday. The completed ballot should be mailed back to elec-

tion officials before Oct. 11. If the ballot is not received before Oct. 15, an overseas voter can send the election officials a federal write-in absentee ballot, which can be obtained from a voting assistance officer. The federal write-in absentee ballot should only be used if an absentee ballot has already been requested, but not received.

To find out more information on the candidates, voters can read U.S. news magazines and newspapers, as well as contacting Democrats Abroad or Republicans Abroad.

“This is the only job in the world where you are allowed to vote for your boss. Big companies like Microsoft don’t get that luxury,” said Cpl. Jacob A. Greenmun, T-64 mechanic, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16. “You have no room to complain if you do not vote. If you have an opinion you need to go to the polls and express it.”

CMC

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tant to him. “When he talked about how we are killing ourselves, that caught my attention. It is minor mistakes that are getting us killed. I’m of age (to drink), and it is important to not go overboard drinking. Do not drink and drive. It is better to crash (sleep) in your car, than crash your car,” he said.

The general also spoke about the rotation tour and explained that battalions and squadrons could expect seven-month rotation cycles.

Regiments, groups and command elements will likely be deployed for a year at a time he said. The commandant added stop loss or stop move policies are not likely to be implemented.

The commandant’s wife, Silke B. Hagee, spoke about the purpose of the Key Volunteer Network. She also asked Marines not to overwork our volunteers.

“The Key Volunteer Network has been designed to help immediate families, immediate family members, our spouses and children. Our key volunteers have been overworked. They have gotten questions from parents. They have

been called by parents. We are going to lose our key volunteers if we continue to do that. They are staying up at night,” said Silke.

Marines need to let family members know how to keep in touch with them when they deploy, explained Navy Lt. Vernon Vergara, staff chaplain, H&HS. “I’ll get a call from a parent wanting to know about their son, and I’ll ask what unit are they with and they don’t know.”

Vergara added that there are a couple of other resources for support for family members beyond spouses.

“The American Red Cross can help families with health and welfare information. If a family member is just looking for a support network, or just looking to talk to someone who knows what you are going through and has been deployed, the Veterans of Foreign Wars are a good resource.”

The general concluded the brief with the opportunity to directly ask him questions.

“You were able to actually speak to him face to face and it didn’t matter what rank you were,” said Pfc. Salvador Moralessolis, training clerk, H&HS.

JUMP

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“The reason we chose to do a HAHO vice a (high altitude low opening) jump was the stand off distance the aircraft would be from the drop zone as well as the noise of the parachutes opening at 10 thousand feet vice four thousand feet is not even close,” he explained. “The sound of a parachute opening at four thousand feet is quite distinct, but there is no noise of a parachute opening at 10 thousand feet.”

The mission itself was exciting for all involved, because even though units train for this in peacetime operations, it doesn’t happen often, claimed Sgt. Lee A. Davis, loadmaster, VMGR-234.

“It went great,” the 21-year-old Arlington, Texas, native claimed. “It’s really rare for us and we don’t get to do it that often so we really

love it when we get the chance.”

The older recon pathfinders, none of whom were under the rank of staff sergeant, may have been even more excited than the younger loadmaster, he noted.

“These guys were waiting their whole careers to do this in combat,” he said.

The insertions made in past efforts by the recon Marines have varied from using ground and aquatic vehicles to just plain walking. Smalenberg also down played the excitement a bit by mentioning that a parachute insertion seemed like the method of choice for the Marines.

“Every time we roll out of the camp in vehicles, the enemy knows,” he said. “I feel safer doing this than driving my vehicle out of the camp. This is the best means (of insertion). Besides, it’s just another way to get to work.”

FAMILY

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thing right out of a dream.

“I think the word surreal is probably a good definition for how it feels to have my son pin on my rank, especially in a war zone,” expressed King, a former gunnery sergeant. “This promotion will most likely be my last before I retire, so I’d have to say this is one of the more special things that has happened to me in my 22 years in the Marine Corps.

“I think that having my son here to do the honor is totally cool and one more attention gainer for Jonathan,” continued the visibly moved officer. “It brings a smile to my face having my son promote me and it almost makes being in Iraq enjoyable.”

“Even though this was my first time pinning on rank for my dad and I was a little nervous,” said Jonathan, “it was still a great honor to be a part of such a significant experience. The fact that he’s my father made the pride and honor I felt doing it much greater.”

AD

Miramar Movies

The Station Auditorium is located in building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies free of charge. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information contact 577-4143 or log on to www.mccsmiramar.com.

Today:
4:30 p.m. Sleepover (PG)
6:30 p.m. The Notebook (PG-13)
9 p.m. White Chicks (PG)

Saturday:
1 p.m. Two Brothers (PG)
6:30 p.m. Spiderman 2 (PG)
9 p.m. Around the World in 80 Days (PG)

Sunday:
1 p.m. Dodgeball (PG-13)
6:30 p.m The Terminal (PG-13)

Wednesday:
6:30 p.m. King Arthur (PG-13)

Thursday:
2 p.m. Two Brothers (PG)
6:30 p.m. The Notebook (PG-13)

Presentations and time subject to change.

CLEP testing

The Miramar Education Office is now offering 14 paper and pencil College Level Education Program (CLEP) tests.

The tests are administered Wednesdays at 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Only two copies of each test are stocked and reservations are recommended. Free study guides are available at the Education Office, or contact banksc@miramar.usmc.mil for more information.

Religious Services

The Chaplain’s Office is located in building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities contact the Chaplain’s Office at 577-1333.

Sunday:
9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist

Wednesday:
7 p.m. Baptist service
Monday-Friday:
11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic Daily Mass

Jewish:
7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

3rd MAW OIF book

Marine Corps Association bookstores will soon carry an exclusive new title detailing the exploits of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Third Marine Aircraft Wing: Operation Iraqi Freedom” follows the journey of 3rd MAW in support of I Marine Expeditionary Force and coalition forces in liberating Iraq and toppling Saddam Hussein during OIF. The book is a testament to the Marines’ well-proven, colorful battle history.

The cost of the book is \$34 for members and \$36 for non-members.

Marines can visit the MCA Bookstore located at Camp Pendleton’s Main Exchange, Building T1100 on Vandegrift Ave., or call 888-237-7683 to order a copy.

Tuition Assistance

Tuition Assistance (TA) for fiscal year 2004 provides for 100 percent funding of tuition for Voluntary Off-Duty Education (VOLED) up to \$4,500 per year and \$250 per credit for Marines.

For more information, contact the Education Office at 577-1801.

Air Show tickets

Tickets for the Miramar Air Show go on sale Aug. 23 and end Oct. 1.

Military ID card holders may purchase their tickets at the Entertainment Tickets Office ranging from \$8-\$70 for adults and \$3-\$50 for children 3-11.

For more information visit the official site at www.miramarairshow.com.

Impounded Vehicles

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information contact the Provost Marshal’s Office at 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:	Date:	Stored at:
Green 1995 Dodge Neon	CA/3KGZ374	Jul. 7	Eastgate Towing
Blue 1989 Subaru GL	CA/1REE135	Jul. 16	Eastgate Towing
Red Honda Prelude	NONE	Jul. 16	Eastgate Towing
Red Sea King Boat	NONE	Jul. 22	Eastgate Towing
White Hydra Sports Boat	FL/CZ639M	Jul. 22	Eastgate Towing
Black VW Jetta	NONE	Jul. 27	Eastgate Towing

AD